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The updated humanitarian priorities of UNICEF

Summary

This report was prepared as a follow-up to the reports, "Children and Women in Emergencies: Strategic Priorities and Operational Concerns for UNICEF" (E/ICEF/1997/7) and "UNICEF Core Corporate Commitments in Emergencies" (E/ICEF/2000/12), which outlined the UNICEF response in emergencies and a set of core commitments to children in emergencies.

The present report builds on the existing strategy and provides information concerning the updated Core Commitments for Children in Emergencies (CCCs). The document is based on recent UNICEF experience in crises, and the UNICEF response to the changing global environment. The annex contains a matrix which outlines the components of the CCCs and defines the parameters of those commitments.

I. Introduction

1. The UNICEF mandate in emergencies is to protect the rights of children and women, ensure the rigorous application of international standards for their assistance and protection, and provide urgent assistance to meet their needs. UNICEF works with many United Nations, non-governmental organization (NGO) and national and international partners to ensure that this assistance is reliable, effective and timely. In recent years, the context for humanitarian action has changed. Both the number and the complexity of emergencies have increased, presenting an added threat to children's and women's rights. The role of UNICEF in emergency situations is therefore more important than ever before.

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2. In a similar vein, given the changing nature of global threats, the world has also become more dangerous for humanitarian workers themselves. While UNICEF must strive to deliver its mandate, the organization must also ensure that everything possible is done to maintain the safety and security of staff and implement measures to reduce the risks they face to an acceptable level. In addition, strengthened United Nations coordination, particularly through the work of the Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs (ECHA) and the Executive Committee on Peace and Security (ECPS), has enhanced coherent action across the United Nations system. Likewise, the work of the Inter-Agency Security Management Network and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) has developed significantly over the past years, and now provides a unique forum for exchange and coordination for a broad group of United Nations and non-governmental humanitarian actors.

3. Today's emergencies, both natural disasters and conflict-induced crises, present particular challenges. These include large-scale displacement of populations, both internally and across national boundaries; the breakdown of state institutions and community and family structures; political turbulence; human rights violations against civilians; disruption and lower quality of social service delivery systems, and the lack of governance and/or presence of non-state entities. These factors lead to increased morbidity and mortality of women and children. For instance, repeated displacement can increase mortality rates by as much as 60 per cent. Displaced children may be denied the right to education due to a lack of birth certificates or inability to pay school fees. Increasingly, these situations are compounded by the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Girls and women are routinely targeted by gender-based violence, including rape, mutilation, prostitution and sexual slavery. Moreover, women and children also frequently become victims of indiscriminate weapons of war, such as landmines.

4. In 2003-2004, approximately one third of the countries in which UNICEF operates are responding to crises and emergencies, and approximately 25–30 per cent of UNICEF funding is dedicated emergency funding. As the organization's overall income has increased, so has the portion for emergencies, from $116 million in 1998 to $443 million in 2003, indicating the significant rise in the scale and nature of emergencies. When regular resources are included, total emergency expenditures amounted to approximately 40 per cent of total expenditure in 2003.

5. Operating in an environment characterized by these factors has operational and programmatic implications for UNICEF. As a result, in 2003 UNICEF updated its Core Commitments for Children in Emergencies (CCCs). This process entailed the clarification of the role of UNICEF in the protection of and assistance to children and women. The work focused on the comparative advantage of UNICEF in the light of the enhanced coordination of humanitarian actors. The clarification also outlines a clear distinction between life-saving and protection interventions that should be carried out immediately, within the first six to eight weeks of any crisis, and the broader spectrum of essential humanitarian activities that may be added once an initial response is well established. The purpose of the revised CCCs is to enhance the timeliness, effectiveness and predictability of the UNICEF humanitarian response, and to reinforce the link between the UNICEF response to crises and the organization's global mandate to promote and help ensure the fulfilment of the rights of children and women.

II. Capacity-building for improved emergency response

6. Following the adoption in 1998 of a set of recommendations to improve its response to children in unstable situations, UNICEF initiated an internal capacity-building process supported by the United Kingdom Department for International Development (DfID). This process has enhanced the organization's ability to ensure a coordinated response that is coherent with its priorities and with inter-agency coordination by integrating new functions and tools into existing processes and structures. The current CCCs build on the achievements gained through this capacity-building process.

7. This programme of cooperation has supported the development and implementation of policy, improved operational systems (e.g., security, human resources, telecommunications, etc.); the development and mainstreaming of an emergency preparedness planning framework; and increased understanding and awareness throughout the organization on the impact of armed conflict on children. The process of strengthening capacities will continue in a number of areas and will also continue the traditional support of UNICEF to strengthen national capacities.

8. **Guidance on humanitarian policy**. Based on best practices from the field, policy guidance related to children affected by armed conflict has been provided to country offices and to other United Nations and intergovernmental bodies. Among the issues covered are, inter alia: the demobilization and reintegration of child soldiers; child protection in situations of conflict; adolescent participation in programming in conflict and post-conflict situations; and children's involvement in transitional justice mechanisms. This work is done in close collaboration with United Nations and NGO humanitarian partners. At the intergovernmental level, UNICEF contributes to the Security Council's annual thematic debate on children and armed conflict and contributes, with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict and other United Nations actors working on this issue, to the Secretary-General's annual report on children and armed conflict. UNICEF has participated in pre-deployment assessment missions of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (in Burundi, Côte d'Ivoire and Haiti) and will continue to support the appointment of child protection advisors, on a case-by-case basis, and to provide input to the mandates of United Nations missions to ensure they integrate child protection concerns. UNICEF also pursues its humanitarian policy and advocacy efforts on behalf of children in armed conflict through ECHA, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and the IASC, including significant policy input to the Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) Unit. Through support to the European Commission's Humanitarian Office (ECHO), UNICEF is collaborating with a network of NGO and United Nations partners to collect better data on the impact of armed conflict on children. This effort will serve to enhance the organization's knowledge on the impact of displacement and child recruitment in four countries (Angola, Colombia, Democratic Republic of the Congo and Sri Lanka).

9. **Training on humanitarian issues**. UNICEF has revised and updated its set of humanitarian principles to include the core principles of the humanitarian imperative, neutrality and impartiality, and four additional principles that guide its humanitarian action: accountability; participation of affected populations; "do no harm"; and respect for culture and custom. These principles are being promoted through various new and existing learning initiatives, such as training on

humanitarian principles and international legal standards, training for senior leaders and a new online/CD-ROM course. A principled approach to humanitarian action, which is being developed for both UNICEF staff and partners. UNICEF will continue its training of staff and partners, focusing particularly on strengthening regional capacities for decentralized training efforts.

10. **Emergency preparedness and response planning**. Over 120 UNICEF offices have undertaken initial emergency preparedness and response planning, now managed by UNICEF regional offices. The process has helped to clarify the accountabilities of country offices and individual staff during emergency operations. Challenges remain to more systematically ensure preparedness planning of adequate quality and rigour, so that an improved response will be possible in all cases. UNICEF will continue to strengthen its operational preparedness through stronger integration with the country planning and programming process and through partnerships with such specific donors as DfID and ECHO. In addition, work has begun to ensure that the lessons and approaches from UNICEF work are harnessed to support preparedness planning for coordinated humanitarian action by the United Nations system, including expanded work on early warning through the United Nations Framework Team and inputs to the World Bank's and other "watching briefs".

11. **Training for improved humanitarian response**. Training of UNICEF staff in key emergency-related areas has been carried out through global initiatives, a strong network of regional offices and regional emergency officers, and where possible, in conjunction with partners. Several new training packages were designed, pilot tested and translated, including for: emergency preparedness and response; international legal and ethical standards that guide UNICEF humanitarian action; health and nutrition for emergencies; and monitoring and evaluation in crises. UNICEF will continue its work to ensure that emergency response training builds on the lessons and capacities of its United Nations partners, and that staff have access to minimum emergency training through online training programmes.

12. **Staff security and minimum operating standards**. A clear security policy has been issued, including Minimum Operating Security Standards (MOSS), with clear accountabilities and implementation targets. Virtually all UNICEF staff have now successfully completed a United Nations-wide security training programme and UNICEF offices are being supported to upgrade their security measures and achieve MOSS compliance at the earliest possible date. In addition, the UNICEF Operations Centre has been strengthened to provide a range of services to the field, including monitoring of emergency and security situations and a reliable 24-hour information and communications capability. UNICEF has played an active role in United Nations efforts to develop and implement a threat and risk-assessment model, and system-wide approaches to information technology (IT) and telecommunications. These efforts will continue as UNICEF enhances its early warning capacity, in close collaboration with other humanitarian agencies.

13. **Rapid human resource response mechanisms**. Traditionally, UNICEF has provided staff for immediate emergency response from its regional and country offices. This approach has helped to ensure coherence with national priorities and strong support for national capacity-building within the emergency context. However, the increasing number and complexity of natural and man-made crises have underlined the need for more rapid deployment of staff. In recent months,

UNICEF has reviewed the rapid response mechanisms of several major humanitarian agencies, including the International Committee of the Red Cross, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the World Food Programme (WFP), and will implement an enhanced emergency response strategy for personnel in the coming year. This effort will build on both internal surge capacity and pre-agreed stand-by arrangements for additional qualified technical personnel.

14. **Improved availability and rapid delivery of supplies**. Both natural and man-made emergencies increase exposure to disease, harsh environments, inadequate food reserves and loss of property and support structures. In such contexts, the rapid provision of emergency supplies is essential. These supplies, which include essential drugs, nutritional supplements, non-food items, equipment for water supply, health facilities and schools, and telecommunications and IT equipment, are all major components of the UNICEF emergency response. In recent years, UNICEF has greatly improved the efficiency of its supply operations through enhanced inventory controls, supplier agreements and more recently, the decentralization of essential emergency supplies and development of in-country logistics systems and delivery mechanisms at the level of beneficiaries. These efforts will continue and additional support will be provided to streamline supply planning and delivery, linked to enhanced coordination of a United Nations response.

III. Humanitarian response

15. Children are among those most affected by humanitarian crises. An estimated 20 million children have been forced to flee their homes and some 300,000 child soldiers are involved in more than 30 conflicts worldwide. UNICEF continues to work with United Nations agencies, NGOs and other partners to maximize its emergency support to children and women in the areas of health, nutrition, water and environmental sanitation, education, protection and HIV/AIDS prevention. UNICEF will work with partner agencies to ensure a coordinated response to all natural and conflict-induced disasters affecting children and women, including support for IDPs and, in close coordination with UNHCR, support for specific needs of child and women refugee populations.

16. The provision of essential medical supplies and technical assistance for emergency health services and the restoration of basic primary health care are essential emergency response components. For example, immunization campaigns carried out in collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO), NGOs and ministries of health continue to reach millions of children, thus preventing such diseases as measles, one of the largest killers of children in previous emergencies. UNICEF will continue to support these essential elements of emergency response and will include specific assistance against malaria, diarrhoeal disease and HIV/AIDS.

17. Disruption of food supplies, family support structures and feeding practices for young children often leads to significant increases in child malnutrition during humanitarian crises. UNICEF has a long history of support to feeding young children in emergencies, including the protection and promotion of breastfeeding, as well as supplemental and therapeutic feeding of young children when necessary. UNICEF will work with WFP, NGOs and government partners to ensure coordinated

support for nutrition in emergencies, technical assistance for nutritional screening and surveillances and provision of supplies where needed. This is an area where additional support from country, regional and headquarters will be required in the near future.

18. Water and sanitation interventions in humanitarian crises provide essential, immediate life-saving support, as a very large portion of morbidity and mortality in emergencies is due to water-borne diseases. UNICEF has been one of the only United Nations actors involved in the large-scale provision of water, sanitation and hygiene services to populations affected by crises. UNICEF will continue working with partners in humanitarian crises to ensure a minimum supply of safe drinking water, the provision of sanitation facilities and supplies, and support for public hygiene campaigns.

19. UNICEF is the main United Nations agency focused on education and the resumption of schooling in emergencies. Getting children back to school is one of the best ways to enhance initial protection. Resumption of schooling is also an essential way to integrate key messages on sanitation, healthy behaviour, HIV prevention etc., and behavioural change often starts with children. Perhaps most importantly, the resumption of schooling in an emergency, usually with temporary classrooms, is a key intervention that helps children and adults start to think beyond their tragedy. School is a component of daily life that starts to re-establish patterns of normalcy and thus helps children, in particular, to deal with their trauma. UNICEF provides materials for temporary classrooms, trains teachers in essential skills and provides 'schools in a box', which are quick-start kits of school materials that allow schools to restart urgently as people start to settle. Back-to-school campaigns have allowed millions of children to start school: over 1 million in Angola, 4 million children in Iraq, 330,000 children in Liberia and more than 4 million children in Afghanistan are now back in school. And in just two years, Afghanistan has wiped out a seven-year education deficit, including a massive increase in the enrolment of young girls.

20. Awareness of the importance of child protection has increased considerably in the past 10 years. UNICEF has expanded its work in this area, notably with NGO and United Nations partners, but there is still need for significantly increased capacity in protection. UNICEF has focused on: preventing the separation of young children from their parents and tracing and reuniting families following crises; psychosocial support to children and women affected by armed conflict; disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of child soldiers; and work to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse of girls and women. UNICEF has been engaged in demobilization and reintegration activities for child soldiers in Afghanistan, Angola, Colombia, Liberia, Rwanda, the Sudan, Uganda and many other countries. UNICEF continues to expand its work to prevent and address sexual violence. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, for example, more than 5,000 survivors of sexual violence, aged between 4 and 80 years, have received medical, surgical and psychosocial assistance and support for reintegration into their communities. Given the catastrophic impact of HIV/AIDS and the increased vulnerability to HIV in periods of conflict and displacement, UNICEF will continue and expand its support to prevention and care activities during periods of crisis.

21. The year 2004 marks the twelfth year of direct engagement by UNICEF in mine action. UNICEF currently works within the United Nations system and with

NGO partners to support mine-risk education; the rehabilitation of landmine survivors; and advocacy for a total ban on anti-personnel landmines. With its United Nations partners, UNICEF is participating in an overall review of support to mine action during the current year. Based on this review, UNICEF will further clarify its role and support in mine action to complement the roles of other United Nations and NGO partners working in the field. UNICEF believes that mine action response and life-saving assistance should move rapidly towards medium- and long-term solutions, with an emphasis on national capacity-building, community participation and community-based recovery strategies.

22. Adopting a set of core commitments in 2001 helped UNICEF to focus on a clear set of priority responses to crisis. An assessment of performance in implementing the CCCs has concluded that further focus is required to distinguish between the immediate protection and life-saving interventions that must be supported within the first six to eight weeks of a crisis, and the broader scope of essential activities that may be added once an initial response is well established. The revised CCCs also include greater attention to two major challenges that have emerged in the past decade: prevention of HIV/AIDS; and strengthening child protection. In defining priority action in emergencies, UNICEF has worked closely with its partners, including the IASC working groups in these areas. UNICEF aims to build on existing work and/or national priorities, including an emphasis on preparedness with national authorities and other partners prior to the emergency. Finally, the CCCs provide opportunities to strengthen UNICEF support for post-conflict transition periods. UNICEF will focus on technical leadership for sectoral assessments and support to the restoration of social services, in line with its experience in this area.

23. The revised CCCs fall into four principal areas:

(a) **Rapid assessment**. The ability to conduct an immediate assessment of the situation of children and women in crisis, and an objective analysis of the capacity to manage and respond to the situation. This assessment should be done with partners and should focus on risk and vulnerability analysis, identifying gaps where increased support is required. In addition, all UNICEF country offices are required to have an annually updated preparedness and contingency plan;

(b) **Coordination and partnerships**. In all programme and operational areas, UNICEF will work with partners to ensure that the CCCs are achieved. For each CCC, it is emphasized that UNICEF will collaborate with partners to address the initial emergency response commitments in the first six to eight weeks and beyond. UNICEF will act in partnership within the United Nations system and with local counterparts and NGOs to ensure timely delivery of appropriate humanitarian assistance;

(c) **Programmatic response**. The required minimum intervention in various programme sectors, in cooperation with national counterparts and international partners;

(d) **Organizational response**. Operational capacities, procedures and resources to ensure that the funds, staff and supplies required for appropriate programmatic response can be made available on a timely basis. This includes mechanisms that will ensure the safety and security of UNICEF staff and assets at all times.

24. See the annex for a detailed outline of the CCCs.

IV. Partnerships

25. In accordance with General Assembly Resolution 46/182 of 19 December 1991 and the Secretary-General's 1997 reform package, UNICEF has strongly supported improving the coordination of the United Nations humanitarian assistance. For example, UNICEF has provided a number of humanitarian coordinators and UNICEF secondees have led the IASC secretariat since its inception. UNICEF has also chaired or co-chaired numerous IASC reference groups, sub-working groups and task forces to support a strong inter-agency policy and response coordination structure. The External Review of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, commissioned by OCHA and published in December 2003, highlighted the strong support of UNICEF to the IASC, including as examples its level of engagement in the sub-working groups on the Consolidated Appeals Process and particularly on contingency planning. UNICEF is a regular participant in the ECHA, ECPS and the United Nations Development Group (UNDG), working to enhance coordination and coherence of the United Nations system-wide response to crisis, post-conflict transition and longer-term development work.

26. UNICEF has discussed the revised CCCs in detail with its United Nations partners, both bilaterally and through discussions of the IASC. Presentations have also been made to a number of humanitarian donors to ensure greater understanding of the UNICEF role in emergencies and greater complementarity in humanitarian action. UNICEF now works more closely than ever with its key United Nations humanitarian partners UNHCR, WFP and WHO. Specific work has begun to review joint efforts in humanitarian assistance in order to enhance cooperation and coordination. Over recent months, for example, UNICEF and WFP have reviewed their joint work. In March 2004, the Executive Directors of both organizations met to outline concrete steps to enhanced collaboration and complementary action. Agreement was reached that the immediate focus will be on three areas: (a) increasing primary school enrolment and retention of young girls; (b) reducing malnutrition; and (c) reducing the risk and burden of HIV/AIDS, particularly focusing on orphans and vulnerable children. In a similar vein, UNICEF is seeking to strengthen collaboration with UNHCR through engagement with the United Nations system-wide study on transition, the "4Rs" (Repatriation, Reintegration, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction) Support Group and the wider Durable Solutions Project being pursued by UNHCR and others.

27. UNICEF strongly supports the recent Good Humanitarian Donorship initiative and the commitment of its donor partners to implement the study's relevant recommendations. UNICEF will participate in the initial pilot implementation of the principles and good practices in Burundi and in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In Eritrea, Sierra Leone and Sri Lanka, progress has been made on the transition/4Rs approach and discussions are ongoing to strengthen this work through partnerships with the World Bank and others. This process is underway, in collaboration with OCHA, the IASC and country teams. UNICEF participates as a United Nations observer in the annual Montreux Retreats and disseminates the outcome donor paper, Common Observations, as part of training updates to UNICEF staff. Linked to enhanced coordination of and improved emergency response, UNICEF and WHO have jointly led the inter-agency work to organize and analyse in-country assessments more consistently and transparently. A common framework for country-based assessments was developed and will be tested by the IASC in pilot

countries to improve the joint capacities of donors and the United Nations to allocate humanitarian funding in proportion to needs and on the basis of needs assessments.

28. Emergencies present opportunities to be part of joint programming and common services with United Nations and NGO partners. UNICEF will continue to support these efforts, looking for opportunities to share services, e.g., communication and logistics, from the onset of emergency planning. United Nations Joint Logistics Cells have been supported in Afghanistan, Iraq, Haiti and other countries and this collaboration will continue and expand. UNICEF will also continue to lead and coordinate key programmatic sectors, for example its work in Iraq for water and sanitation and in Afghanistan for education.

29. UNICEF will also continue to strengthen other areas of partnership, including stand-by arrangements with such international NGOs as the Danish Refugee Council, Norwegian Church Aid, the Norwegian Refugee Council, RedR and the Swedish Rescue Services Agency, which are sponsored by their national Governments to support UNICEF and other United Nations agencies. UNICEF will shortly finalize a standard memorandum of understanding, common deployment guidelines and competency profiles, which will help the process of rapid deployment of human resources to the field. UNICEF also works closely with such institutions as the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in the areas of nutrition, immunization and other sectors. UNICEF is working with various donor partners to increase the sharing of assessment data and enhance coherence in strategies for protecting children in emergencies.

30. UNICEF is continuing to expand community capacity-development strategies which can be applied in emergency situations. This involves engagement with national authorities, NGOs, local community-based organizations and communities to strengthen their capacities to identify and implement disaster mitigation actions which have been identified locally. Notable examples of this are in Mozambique and Zimbabwe. In Mozambique, for example, a successful bednet distribution programme, which was supplemented by large-scale participatory community capacity-building achieved results, in an emergency context, which had not been recorded anywhere else.

31. UNICEF will continue to participate in United Nations Consolidated Appeals as an essential resource mobilization tool. Although significant additional resources have been mobilized for humanitarian action, funds have been insufficient to fully implement UNICEF programmes focused on emergency response. UNICEF will continue to seek additional funding for strengthened response capacity and specific sectoral capacity-building, in addition to country- and regionally-based humanitarian assistance programmes.

Annex

Principles and Core Commitments for Children in Emergencies

Guiding Principles

The key guiding principles UNICEF will follow throughout an emergency response.

1. Children in the midst of armed conflict and natural disasters such as drought, floods and earthquakes have the same needs and rights as children in stable countries.

2. Our response will recognize the priority of humanitarian action while assuring safe access to affected populations, and the safety and security of staff and assets.

3. The emergency response will build on existing activities and partnerships developed through the country programme of cooperation.

4. The response will be based on nationally defined priorities and the comparative advantage of UNICEF.

Operating Approach

The operating approach UNICEF will apply throughout an emergency response. UNICEF will:

1. Conduct a rapid assessment to identify priority humanitarian action for children.

2. Implement a valid and reliable system to monitor, regularly report on and publicize the needs of children, and to evaluate the impact of the response.

3. Establish its response as part of a coordinated United Nations response plan, designed in collaboration with national and other partners.

4. Position itself in sectoral coordinating roles, wherever appropriate.

5. Put in place operational systems and resources for the rapid delivery of supplies and technical assistance.

6. Operationalize humanitarian response mechanisms that prevent and limit the exposure of children and women to abuse, violence, exploitation and HIV/AIDS.

Rapid Assessment

In consultation and collaboration with partners, UNICEF will carry out a rapid assessment of the situation of children and women. Drawing upon data compiled in the preparedness phase, this situation analysis will determine the exact nature of the crisis, including potential developments, implications for the rights of children and women, and the required programmatic response, operational modalities and security.

First six to eight weeks

1. Immediately conduct a rapid assessment (inter-agency or independently, as appropriate) within the first 48-72 hours to determine:

- programmatic needs in the areas of health and nutrition, education, child protection, water supply and sanitation, HIV/AIDS and other salient child-rights issues;
- factors affecting the organization's capacity to function in the field: e.g., the presence of national telecommunications and infrastructure, access and mobility, and the availability/readiness of office infrastructure, vehicles, warehousing and human resources for UNICEF and/or agencies working in the area.

This requires compiling basic data required through secondary research, new data collection from immediate site visits, and analysis and extrapolation from data previously compiled in the preparedness phase. This first rapid assessment will provide the basis for the UNICEF programmatic response.

2. Through rapid assessment and other means, gather information necessary for UNICEF to effectively report on and advocate for children's rights through the appropriate channels.

3. Within the first week, develop a simple, one-month data-collection plan to cover key data gaps as required for the continued emergency response. This brief plan will identify: data gaps regarding children's and women's rights; key questions to be monitored regarding the immediate implementation of the programme response (areas where bottlenecks may occur, activities about which managers are most concerned); an outline of focused assessments or field visits to cover these data needs; and resources assigned to cover data-collection activities. Ideally, the plan should also reflect key data collection activities by other organizations that might contribute to the plan's overall effectiveness.

4. Collect and update information, and report through the appropriate mechanisms on the situation of children and any violations of their rights.[1]

Beyond initial response

5. Conduct an expanded rapid assessment (inter-agency or independently, as appropriate) to provide information that will feed into the medium-term response, e.g., a 100-day plan. This will also draw from secondary data from other organizations and will either be a synthesis/analysis exercise, if field data collection has continued through the first three weeks, or will require a second intensive field data-collection exercise.

6. Develop and implement a minimal Integrated Monitoring and Evaluation Plan to support management of the medium-term response with key indicators on implementation and output (e.g., inputs delivered; coverage of therapeutic feeding) and, where possible, outcome indicators (e.g., on nutritional status), and the information systems to be used (e.g., reporting by partner NGOs, field visits). Identify additional data requirements and collection mechanisms.

[1] Reference should be made to the Core Corporate Commitments for Child Protection (see below).

Coordination

Ensure that the UNICEF response is part of a coordinated United Nations response, designed in collaboration with local and other partners. Assume a sectoral coordinating role as appropriate.

1. In partnership with United Nations agencies, national authorities and others ensure capacity where needed to assume a coordinating role for:

- public health;
- nutrition;
- child protection;
- education;
- water, sanitation and hygiene.

2. Support the Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator structure in ensuring that a clear coordination mechanism is formed as quickly as possible, including possibilities for creating common systems.

3. Identify partners for interventions in the areas of health, nutrition, education, child protection and water and sanitation with a clear division of labour.

Programme Core Commitments

The First Six to Eight Weeks of a Crisis: Initial Emergency Response Commitments

The initial emergency response commitments that UNICEF, in collaboration with partners, will address in the first six to eight weeks of an emergency. To realize these commitments, UNICEF will commit resources and cooperate with national bodies and other partners, with emphasis on building local capacities from the outset.

1. Within established mechanisms, assess, monitor, advocate for, report and communicate on the situation of children and women: (a) conduct a rapid assessment of the situation of children and women; and (b) establish initial monitoring systems, including on severe or systematic abuse, violence or exploitation, and report through the appropriate mechanisms.

2. Health: (a) vaccinate all children aged 6 months to 14 years against measles; at minimum children aged 6 months through 4 years must be immunized. Provide vaccines and critical inputs such as cold-chain equipment, training and social mobilization expertise, financial support for advocacy and operational costs. Along with the vaccination, provide vitamin A supplementation as required; (b) provide essential drugs, emergency health kits, oral rehydration mix, fortified nutritional products and micronutrient supplements; and (c) provide other emergency supplies such as blankets, tarpaulins, etc.

3. Nutrition: (a) based on rapid assessments, provide child and maternal feeding: support infant and young child feeding and therapeutic and supplementary feeding programmes with the World Food Programme (WFP) and NGO partners; and (b) introduce nutritional monitoring and surveillance.

4. Water, sanitation and hygiene: (a) ensure the availability of a minimum safe drinking water supply, taking into account the privacy, dignity and security of women and girls; (b) provide bleach, chlorine or water purification tablets, including detailed user and safety instructions; (c) provide jerry cans, or an appropriate alternative, and include user instructions and messages on the handling of water and disposal of excreta and solid waste; (d) provide soap and disseminate key hygiene messages on the dangers of cholera and other water- and excreta-related diseases; and (e) facilitate safe excreta and solid waste disposal by providing equipment, support for education and operational costs.

5. Child protection: (a) conduct a rapid assessment of the situation of children and women. Within the appropriate mechanisms, monitor, advocate against, report and communicate on severe, systematic abuse, violence and exploitation; (b) assist in the prevention of separation, and facilitate the identification, registration and medical screening of separated children, particularly those under five years of age and adolescent girls; (c) ensure that family-tracing systems are put in place with appropriate care and protection facilities; (d) prevent sexual abuse and exploitation of children and women by monitoring, reporting and advocating against instances of sexual violence, providing post-rape health and psychosocial care and support. Internally, with regards to humanitarian workers and staff, undertake and promote humanitarian activities in a manner that minimizes opportunities for sexual exploitation and abuse. Ensure that all UNICEF staff and partners sign the Code of Conduct and be aware of appropriate mechanisms for reporting breaches of any of its six core principles.

6. Education: (a) set up temporary learning spaces with minimal infrastructure; and (b) resume schooling by reopening schools and starting the reintegration of teachers and children by providing teaching and learning materials, and organizing semi-structured recreational activities.

7. HIV/AIDS: provide post-rape-care kits, including post-exposure prophylaxis for HIV, where appropriate, to health posts.

Health and Nutrition

To promote access to essential and quality health and nutritional services, in collaboration with partners, UNICEF will:

First six to eight weeks

1. Vaccinate all children aged 6 months to 14 years against measles, at minimum children from 6 months through 4 years of age must be immunized. Provide vaccines and critical inputs such as cold-chain equipment, training and social mobilization expertise and financial support for advocacy and operational costs. Along with the vaccination, provide vitamin A supplementation, as required.

2. Provide essential drugs, emergency health kits, post-rape-care kits where necessary, oral rehydration mix, fortified nutritional products and micronutrient supplements.

3. Provide other emergency supplies such as blankets, tarpaulins and cooking sets.

4. Based on rapid assessments, provide child and maternal feeding: support infant and young child feeding and therapeutic and supplementary feeding programmes with WFP and NGO partners.

5. Introduce nutritional monitoring and surveillance.

Beyond initial response

6. Support the establishment of essential health-care services, including by providing outreach services and home-based management of childhood illnesses and emergency obstetric care services, including commodities for malaria, diarrhoea and pneumonia.

7. Provide tetanus toxoid with auto-disable syringes and other critical inputs such as cold-chain equipment, training and behavioural change expertise, and financial support for advocacy and operational costs for immunization of pregnant and child-bearing-age women.

8. Support infant and young child feeding, complementary feeding and when necessary, support therapeutic and supplementary feeding programmes with WFP and NGO partners.

9. Provide health and nutrition education, including messages on the importance of breastfeeding and safe motherhood practices.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

To ensure the provision of safe water and proper sanitation for children and women, in collaboration with partners, UNICEF will:

First six to eight weeks

1. Ensure the availability of a minimum safe drinking water supply, taking into account the privacy, dignity and security of women and girls.

2. Provide bleach, chlorine or water purification tablets, including detailed user and safety instructions in the local language.

3. Provide jerry cans, or an appropriate alternative, including user instructions and messages in the local language on handling of water and disposal of excreta and solid waste.

4. Provide soap and disseminate key hygiene messages on the dangers of cholera and other water- and excreta-related diseases.

5. Facilitate safe excreta and solid waste disposal by providing shovels, cash for contracting local service companies to dispose of solid waste; messages on the importance of keeping excreta (including infant faeces) buried and away from habitations and public areas; messages on disposal of human and animal corpses; and instructions on and support for construction of trench and pit latrines.

Beyond initial response

6. Make approaches and technologies used consistent with national standards, thus reinforcing long-term sustainability.

7. Define the continuing involvement of UNICEF beyond the initial response, by:

- Establishing, improving and expanding safe water systems for source development, distribution, purification, storage and drainage, taking into account evolving needs, changing health risks and greater demand;
- Providing a safe water supply and sanitation and hand-washing facilities at schools and health posts;
- Supplying and upgrading sanitation facilities to include semi-permanent structures and household solutions, and providing basic family sanitation kits;
- Establishing regular hygiene promotion activities;
- Planning for long-term solid waste disposal.

Child Protection

UNICEF commits to the protection of children and women from violence, exploitation, abuse and neglect, and in collaboration with partners will:

First six to eight weeks

1. Conduct a rapid assessment of the situation of children and women. Within the appropriate mechanisms, monitor, advocate against, report and communicate on severe, systematic abuse, violence and exploitation.

2. Assist in the prevention of separation, and facilitate the identification, registration and medical screening of separated children, particularly those under five years of age and adolescent girls.

3. Ensure that family-tracing systems are implemented, with appropriate care and protection facilities.

4. Prevent sexual abuse and exploitation of children and women by: (a) monitoring, reporting and advocating against instances of sexual violence by military forces, state actors, armed groups and others; and (b) provide post-rape health and psychosocial care and support. Internally, with regard to humanitarian workers and staff: (a) undertake and promote humanitarian activities in a manner that minimizes opportunities for sexual exploitation and abuse; and (b) all UNICEF staff and partners are to sign the Code of Conduct and be aware of appropriate mechanisms for reporting breaches of its six core principles.

Beyond initial response

5. Within established mechanisms, support the establishment of initial monitoring systems, including on severe or systematic abuse, violence and exploitation.

6. In cases where children are separated from caregivers or at risk of being separated, directly and through partners expand support to: (a) assist in preventing the separation of children from their caregivers; (b) facilitate the identification, registration and medical screening of separated children, particularly those under five years of age and adolescent girls; (c) facilitate the registration of all parents/caregivers who have lost their children; (d) provide support for the care and protection of separated children, including shelter; and (e) support partners involved in tracing and reunification, and provide tracing equipment, as required.

7. Provide support for the care and protection of orphans and other vulnerable children.

8. Support the establishment of safe environments for children and women, including child-friendly spaces, and integrate psychosocial support in education and protection responses.

9. In cases of armed conflict and in accordance with international legal standards, directly and through partners: (a) monitor, report on and advocate against the recruitment and use of children in any capacity during armed conflicts; (b) seek commitments from parties to refrain from recruiting and using children; and (c) negotiate the release of children who were recruited and introduce demobilization and reintegration programmes.

10. Within established mechanisms, monitor, report on and advocate against the use of landmines and other indiscriminate weapons by both state and non-state actors. Coordinate mine-risk education.

Education

To promote access to quality early learning and education for all children in affected communities, with a specific focus on girls, in collaboration with partners, UNICEF will:

First six to eight weeks

1. Set up temporary learning spaces with minimal infrastructure.

2. Resume schooling by reopening schools and starting the reintegration of teachers and children by providing teaching and learning materials and organizing semi-structured recreational activities.

Beyond initial response

3. Re-establish and/or sustain primary education. Provide education and recreation kits, basic learning materials and teacher training.

4. Promote the resumption of quality educational activities in literacy, numeracy and such life-skills issues as HIV/AIDS, prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse, conflict resolution and hygiene.

5. Establish community services around schools (such as water supply and sanitation), where appropriate.

HIV/AIDS

Taking into account the increased risk of HIV/AIDS infection in humanitarian situations, UNICEF, in collaboration with partners, will:

First six to eight weeks

1. Provide post-rape-care kits, including post exposure prophylaxis for HIV where appropriate, to health centres.

Beyond initial response

To promote access to information and basic care on HIV/AIDS for affected communities, especially children, young people and women, in collaboration with all relevant partners, UNICEF will:

2. Inform young people about HIV transmission and prevention using the three primary prevention methods: Abstinence, Be faithful and consistent Condom use. Inform young people on where to access basic health and counselling services, and collaborate with partners to facilitate young people's access to comprehensive HIV prevention services including treatment for sexually transmitted infections.

3. Provide health-care workers with training on post-rape health and psychosocial care.

Operational Core Commitments

Operational Commitments

These are the initial operational commitments which UNICEF will undertake in the first six to eight weeks of an emergency and will commit the resources to fulfil.

1. Security: (a) within the appropriate mechanisms, undertake a risk and threat assessment to determine the exact nature of crisis, potential developments and implications; (b) review Minimum Operating Security Standards (MOSS) and update if necessary; (c) drawing from the risk and threat assessment, identify implications for staff security and programme activities; (d) undertake a rapid review of security preparedness in country and field offices and provide appropriate guidance, resources and training; (e) establish the exact whereabouts of all staff and determine whether they can operate safely in their present or proposed locations. Provide staff with the resources to do so or temporarily relocate them until the proper conditions can be put into place; and (f) determine the security implications of deploying additional staff to the affected country/area.

2. Fund-raising and communication: (a) Within 24-72 hours of an emergency, UNICEF will prepare a "pitch document" on issues, action and impact for sharing with government donors and National Committees for UNICEF. The document will later be revised based on assessments and participation in an inter-agency appeal process; (b) communicate on the situation and needs of children through local and international media within the first 72 hours, as appropriate; (c) prepare an emergency appeal in coordination with other United Nations agencies and another document, to be shared with donors, outlining the UNICEF portion of the inter-agency appeal; and (d) issue regular emergency donor updates.

3. Human resources: Identify and deploy experienced staff through internal deployment, external recruitment and standby arrangements with partners.

4. Information technology: (a) provide security and telecommunications equipment and services required for programme implementation, in compliance with MOSS; and (b) provide telecommunications support, such as fly-away Very Small Aperture Terminal (VSAT), inter-agency shared connectivity, etc., and maintain immediate response capacity through stockpile arrangements with equipment suppliers.

5. Supply and logistics: (a) mobilize emergency supplies within 24-48 hours and assist in the development of a country plan; (b) implement procedures and directives for inter-country transfer and movement of supplies; (c) maintain an operational supply network (i.e., the major procurement offices in UNICEF) with the authority to undertake cross-border procurement; (d) deploy staff for inter-agency rapid emergency assessment missions as required, and participate actively in common logistics efforts with United Nations Joint Logistics Centre and other partners; and (e) deploy experienced in-country logistics staff, as required.

6. Finance and administration: (a) Assess financial and administrative capacities in country, including sources of cash, banking and financial systems, available methods of funds disbursement and security of assets; (b) through the use of standard checklists for funds management, provide guidance on funds management and disbursement modalities at the onset of the crisis; (c) put in place internal oversight and control systems while preserving the safety of staff members, partners and assets; and (d) respond rapidly to queries from field offices regarding finance and administration.

Security

Within the inter-agency mechanism, address humanitarian needs while assuring safe access to affected populations, and the safety and security of staff and assets.

First six to eight weeks

1. Within the appropriate mechanisms, undertake a risk and threat assessment to determine the exact nature of crisis, potential developments and implications for programme delivery.

2. Review MOSS and update if necessary.

3. Drawing from the risk and threat assessment identify implications for staff security and programme activities.

4. Undertake a rapid review of security preparedness in country and field offices, and provide appropriate guidance, resources and training.

5. Establish the exact whereabouts of all staff, and determine whether they can operate safely in their present location or in proposed locations. Provide staff with the resources to do so or temporarily relocate them until the proper conditions can be put into place.

6. Determine the security implications of deploying additional staff to the affected country/area.

Beyond initial response

7. Continue to review security plans and MOSS requirements, including relocation, evacuation and safe haven alternatives, with country and regional offices.

8. Participate in inter-agency exercises to regularly update risk and threat analysis, and establish appropriate analytical, long-term information requirements.

9. Provide additional resources, e.g., Field Security Officers, financial support and training to staff as required.

10. Regularly update the Security Plan based on risk and threat analysis and current and proposed programme activities.

Fund-raising and Communication

To communicate on the situation and needs of children, and within the inter-agency framework, to raise funds for UNICEF programmes, UNICEF will:

First six to eight weeks

1. Within 24-72 hours of an emergency, prepare a "pitch document" on issues, action and impact, for sharing with government donors and National Committees for UNICEF. The document will later be revised based on assessments and participation in an inter-agency appeal process.

2. Communicate on the situation and needs of children through local and international media within the first 72 hours, as appropriate.

3. Prepare an emergency appeal in coordination with other United Nations agencies and another document, to be shared with donors, outlining the UNICEF portion of the inter-agency appeal.

4. Issue regular emergency donor updates.

Beyond initial response

5. Based on a fund-raising and communication strategy, engage proactively with donors and media, both locally and at headquarters, providing regular updates and visibility to UNICEF and its donors and partners.

6. Regularly communicate human interest stories for use by National Committees for UNICEF.

7. Manage funds and report on contributions according to specified conditions and time frames.

Human Resources

To ensure the timely deployment of experienced staff, UNICEF will:

First six to eight weeks

1. Identify and deploy experienced staff through internal deployment, external recruitment, and standby arrangements with partners.

- Country offices to identify staffing needs drawing from the preparedness plan and management plan; regional offices and headquarters to provide support when required.

Beyond initial response

2. Provide all staff with basic information and training on emergency preparedness and response, supported by pre-deployment orientation, ongoing training and learning initiatives and post-deployment debriefings.

3. Maintain and enhance UNICEF policies for staff serving in emergency duty stations, while responding to operational needs, and to the needs, safety and security of staff.

4. Provide all staff with information and support to address their well-being, including information on safety and security measures and procedures, HIV/AIDS, critical incidents and chronic work stress.

5. Ensure that staff conduct themselves at all times in a manner befitting their status as international civil servants and avoid any actions that may adversely reflect their integrity, independence and impartiality. In particular, provide staff members with the United Nations rules governing behaviour related to sexual exploitation and abuse contained in the Secretary-General's Bulletin ST/SGB/2003/13 of 9 October 2003. In accordance with United Nations rules, implement a monitoring and complaints mechanism within the organization.

Information Technology and Telecommunications

To ensure the rapid establishment of appropriate information technology and telecommunications services in emergency areas, UNICEF will:

First six to eight weeks

1. Provide security and telecommunications equipment and services required for program implementation, in compliance with MOSS.

2. Provide telecommunications support, such as fly-away VSAT and inter-agency shared connectivity, and maintain immediate response capacity through stockpile arrangements with equipment suppliers.

3. Implement core UNICEF information systems (e.g., the Programme Manager System (ProMS), Lotus Notes) with associated infrastructure in a timely manner.

4. Work within inter-agency forums to ensure opportunities are given for promoting the use of common systems.

Supply and Logistics

To ensure the availability of supplies and logistics for effective and timely fulfilment of the programme Core Corporate Commitments, and to strengthen existing supply and logistics capacities, UNICEF will:

First six to eight weeks

1. Mobilize emergency supplies within 24 to 48 hours of an emergency, and assist in the development of a country plan.

2. Put in place procedures and directives for inter-country transfer and movement of supplies.

3. Maintain an operational supply network (i.e., the major procurement offices in UNICEF) with the authority to provide cross-border procurement.

4. Deploy staff for inter-agency rapid emergency assessment missions as required, and actively participate in common logistics efforts, e.g. United Nations Joint Logistics Centre and others.

5. Deploy experienced in-country logistics staff, as required.

Beyond initial response

6. Maintain regional supply hubs to ensure continuous capacity to address the needs of a population of 420,000 at the onset of an emergency.

7. Institute long-term arrangements with suppliers for rapid replenishment of emergency supplies stored at the Copenhagen warehouse and at the regional emergency hubs.

8. Regularly update the cost estimate by population size of the 25 standard emergency items needed (including transportation costs) for the initial emergency response.

Finance and Administration

To ensure the establishment of an efficient financial and administrative management structure, with regional office and headquarters support, for effective implementation of the programme and operational Core Corporate Commitments, within an environment of sound financial accountability, UNICEF will:

First six to eight weeks

1. Assess financial and administrative capacities in country, including sources of cash, banking and financial systems, available funds disbursement methods and security of assets.

2. Through the use of standard checklists for funds management provide guidance on funds management and disbursement modalities at the onset of the crisis.

3. Put in place internal oversight and control systems while preserving the safety of staff members, partners and assets.

4. Respond rapidly to queries regarding finance and administration from field offices.

Beyond initial response

5. Timely consultation with country offices, regional offices, the Division of Human Resources and other stakeholders to deploy finance and administration staff to emergency duty stations, as required.